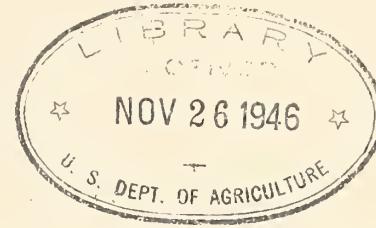


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Excerpt from a radio talk by
W. W. Vincent, chief, western district,
Food and Drug Administration, U. S.
Department of Agriculture, broadcast
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HOW TO READ THE LABEL

Canned Beans

A lot of people in this western country are engaged in the production of beans. There are a lot of bean eaters, particularly among men who have seen service in the Army or the Navy. Beans are an important food. The dried edible bean crop of the United States annually returns the farmers something over 50 million dollars. Large quantities of string beans are canned throughout the West and enormous quantities of dried beans are imported. The Food and Drug Administration devotes considerable attention to beans. I shall tell you something of canned bean products.

Now, for canned beans in general. Canned fresh beans and canned dried beans are available. The fresh class includes the string beans---"stringless," they are sometimes labeled--- also the wax beans and the fresh, or "Green Lima," beans. The dried class covers "Pork and Beans," the red kidney beans, baked beans, and the "Soaked" lima beans.

Canned string beans come to you in two styles of packs, an "Asparagus Style," wherein the beans are packed tightly lengthwise of the can. This is a fancy product of uniform length. The actual drained weight of beans when packed "Asparagus Style" is somewhat greater than when packed in the ordinary style. String beans, in their preparation, usually have the stems and tips removed. In cutting, the "fiber" or string is largely removed. Under commercial conditions, it is impossible to remove all strings. The more mature the beans, the more difficult it is to remove the fibers. When labeled, "Stringless," you may expect beans of good quality and reasonably free from strings. Varieties are sometimes declared. You will recall the names "Kentucky Wonder," and "Refugee." "Refugee" applies to a general class of string beans, including three or four distinct varieties. Varieties slowest in developing fibrous character are classed as "Stringless."

"Green Lima Beans," are those canned while in the fresh or succulent stage. Such a product should contain few, if any, white beans, even though they be fresh. Such white fresh Limas you may expect to receive where labels read, "Lima Beans," unqualified, or "Fresh Lima Beans." If dried limas are soaked and then canned, the labels will read, "Soaked Lima Beans," or bear some equivalent expression. Such labels should bear no pictorial design indicating that fresh beans, or beans in a succulent stage, have been used. The term "Baby Lima" is varietal and has no reference to whether the beans were canned in the fresh condition or soaked dry beans were used.

In the canning of string beans, wax beans and fresh lima beans, it is customary to add brine. Accordingly, your Food and Drug Administration

has established certain drained weight requirements for such beans. Each respective size of tin needs to contain a definite weight of beans. Too much brine is bad for your pocketbook, if purchased at the price of beans.

In "Baked Beans," "Pork and Beans," or "Canned Beans," you will get the white beans of commerce. They may be any of the several varieties often referred to as navy beans, for example--- or the "Pea Bean," grown largely in Michigan--- the large or small white bean of California--- the "Great Northern" of the mountain states, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming--- or the Kotenashi, the white bean of the Orient. Cans labeled, "Red Beans," unqualified, may contain the "Pink Bean" of California, the Mexican or California red bean, the "Red Marrow" bean, or the "Kintoki," the red bean of the Orient. If you want "Red Kidney Beans," considered a superior product, be certain the label specifies "Kidney Beans."

Now for "Pork and Beans." They come to you with or without tomato sauce. Not much pork in this product. No one expects much. Pork is used primarily for flavor value. Where the words, "Baked Beans," "Oven Baked Beans," or "Baked Pork and Beans" appear, the beans should have been "oven-baked" before placed in the can for sterilization. In their preparation, some molasses is frequently added before baking. This contributes to the desired flavor. The terms, "Boston Style," and "New England Style," designate beans so prepared and without the addition of tomato sauce.

If the word, "Baked," is omitted from the label, you may know that the beans have probably first been parboiled, or else the dry beans have just been placed in the can and such real cooking as accorded was for the sterilization of the canned product.

Remember, a net weight statement appears upon the label of all canned beans. A comparison of weight statements will assist in telling you which are the best buys.